

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A personal video recorder having a user-controlled data capture function, the recorder comprising:
- an input for receiving an audiovisual signal and an output for outputting said audiovisual signal;
  - a buffer for buffering said audiovisual signal, said buffer retaining a portion of said audiovisual signal after that portion has been output by said recorder;
  - 10 a data storage unit; and
  - a processor that receives input from a user input device;
- wherein, upon receipt of a user command input through said user input device, said processor records a segment of said audiovisual signal in said data storage unit, said segment of said audiovisual signal comprising:
- 15 a first predetermined amount of said portion of said audiovisual signal retained in said buffer after that same portion has been output by said recorder; and
  - a second predetermined amount of said portion of said audiovisual signal output by said recorder after receipt of said user command.
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2. The recorder of claim 1, wherein said processor associates an identifying label with each said segment of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage unit.
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3. The recorder of claim 2, wherein said processor generates an index of segments of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage unit using said identifying label of each said segment.

4. The recorder of claim 1, wherein said data storage unit is a hard drive.

5. The recorder of claim 1, wherein said user input device comprises a remote control unit and said recorder comprises a receiver for receiving input from said remote control unit.

6. The recorder of claim 5, wherein said user input device comprises a plurality of remote control units, each of which can issue said user command to said recorder.

7. The recorder of claim 6, wherein said processor records an indication with each segment of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage unit as to which remote control unit ordered recording of that segment.

8. The recorder of claim 1, wherein said first and second predetermined amounts are set by user input through said user input device.

9. The recorder of claim 1, wherein said second predetermined amount is determined by a length of time during which a user actuates a button on said user input device for issuing said user command.

10. The recorder of claim 1, further comprising a disk drive for receiving removable data storage disks, wherein said processor transfers recorded segments from said data storage unit to said disk drive under control of said user input device.

11. A method of capturing data with a personal video recorder having a user-controlled data capture function, the recorder comprising:

an input for receiving an audiovisual signal and an output for outputting said audiovisual signal;

5 a buffer for buffering said audiovisual signal, said buffer retaining a portion of said audiovisual signal after that portion has been output by said recorder; and  
a data storage unit;

said method comprising, upon receipt of a user command, recording a segment of said audiovisual signal in said data storage unit, said segment of said  
10 audiovisual signal comprising:

a first predetermined amount of said portion of said audiovisual signal retained in said buffer after that same portion has been output by said recorder; and

a second predetermined amount of said portion of said audiovisual signal output by said recorder after receipt of said user command.  
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12. The method of claim 11, further comprising associating an identifying label with each said segment of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage unit.  
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13. The method of claim 12, further comprising generating an index of segments of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage unit using said identifying label of each said segment.

25 14. The method of claim 11, wherein said user input device comprises a plurality of remote control units, each of which can issue said user command to said recorder, said method further comprising recording an indication with each

segment of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage unit as to which remote control unit ordered recording of that segment.

5 15. The method of claim 11 further comprising setting said first and second predetermined amounts by user input through a user input device of said recorder.

10 16. The method of claim 11 further comprising determining said second predetermined amount as a length of time during which a user actuates a button on a user input device of said recorder for issuing said user command.

17. A personal video recorder having a user-controlled data capture function, the recorder comprising:

15 input means for receiving an audiovisual signal and output means for outputting said audiovisual signal;

a buffer means for buffering said audiovisual signal, said buffer means retaining a portion of said audiovisual signal after that portion has been output by said recorder;

20 a data storage means; and

a processor means that receives input from a user input means;

wherein, upon receipt of a user command input through said user input means, said processor means records a segment of said audiovisual signal in said data storage means, said segment of said audiovisual signal comprising:

25 a first predetermined amount of said portion of said audiovisual signal retained in said buffer means after that same portion has been output by said recorder; and

a second predetermined amount of said portion of said audiovisual signal output by said recorder after receipt of said user command.

18. The recorder of claim 1, further comprising:  
means for associating an identifying label with each said segment of said  
audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage means; and  
5 means for indexing segments of said audiovisual signal recorded in said  
data storage means using said identifying label of each said segment.

19. The recorder of claim 1, wherein said user input means comprise at  
least one remote control unit and said recorder comprises a receiving means for  
10 receiving input from said remote control unit.

20. The recorder of claim 19, wherein said user input means comprise a  
plurality of remote control units, each of which can issue said user command to  
said recorder, wherein said processor means records an indication with each  
15 segment of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage means as to which  
remote control unit ordered recording of that segment.

21. The recorder of claim 1, further comprising means for setting said  
first and second predetermined amounts.

22. The recorder of claim 1, further comprising means for transmitting  
said segments of said audiovisual signal recorded in said data storage means from  
said recorder.